

What the one who knows the Qur'ān must do and not neglect to do

The first thing is to be sincere in seeking it for Allah as we mentioned. You should make yourself recite the Qur'ān night and day, in the prayer or outside the prayer, so that you do not forget it. Muslim transmitted from Ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The example of the one who knows the Qur'ān is like the one who has hobbled camels. If he takes care of them, he will keep them. If he releases them, they will go off. When the one who knows the Qur'ān stands and recites it night and day, he remembers it. If he does not do that, he forgets it." So someone who knows the Qur'ān must praise Allah, be thankful for His blessing, remember Him, rely on Him, seek His help, desire Him and cling to Him. He must remember death and prepare for it. He should fear his wrong actions and hope for his Lord's pardon. His fear when his health is good should be stronger since he does not know what his seal will be. When he is close to dying, his hope should be stronger in himself because of his good opinion of Allah. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "None of you should die except with a good opinion of Allah." This means you should think that He will have mercy on you and forgive you.

He should know the people of his time, preserve himself from the ruler, and strive to save himself and save his life, having to hand what he can of the goods of this world, striving for himself in

that as much as he can. His greatest concern should be scrupulousness in his *dīn*, fearfulness of Allah and watchful awareness of Him in what He commands and forbids. Ibn Mas‘ūd said, “The one who recites the Qur’ān should be known by his nights when people are asleep and his days when people are awake, his weeping when people laugh, his silence when people delve into improper matters, his humility when they are arrogant and his sorrow when they are happy.” ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar said, “The one who knows the Qur’ān should not delve with those who delve, nor be ignorant with the ignorant, but he should pardon and overlook by the right of the Qur’ān because inside of him are the words of Allah Almighty. He must protect himself from doubtful paths and laugh little and speak little in the gatherings of the Qur’ān and elsewhere concerning anything in which there is no benefit. He must be forbearing and grave.

He should be humble to the poor and avoid arrogance and vanity. He should withdraw from this world and its people if he fears temptation for himself, and should abandon argumentation and dispute. He should make an effort to be kind and show proper *adab*. He should be with those from whose evil he is safe, whose good he hopes for and from whose injury he is safe. He should not listen to those who slander in his presence and should keep the company of those who lead him to what is good and direct him to truthfulness and noble character, those who adorn him and do not sully him.

He must learn the rulings of the Qur’ān and understand what Allah means and what He obliges. Then he will benefit from what he reads and act by what he recites. How vile is the one who knows the Qur’ān and recites its obligations and rulings by heart but does not understand what he recites. How can the one who does not understand what it means act? How ugly it is that he is asked about the *fiqh* of what he recites but does not know it. The example of someone with a state like this is only like “*a donkey who carries volumes*” (62:5).

He should know the Makkan from the Madinan *sūras* so that by that he can distinguish between what Allah told His slaves at the

beginning of Islam and what was recommended for them at the end, what He obliged on them at the beginning of Islam and those obligations He added to it at the end. The Madinan abrogates the Makkan in most of the Qur'ān. It is not possible for the Makkan to abrogate the Madinan because the abrogated was revealed before the abrogating. Part of his perfection is to know the *i'rāb* (inflection/grammar) and the unusual. That is part of what will make it easy for him to know what he reads and will remove doubt from him in what he recites.

At-Tabarī said, “I heard al-Jarmī say, ‘For thirty years, I have been giving people *fatwās* in *fiqh* taken from the book of Sibuwayh [i.e. based on grammar].’” Muḥammad ibn Yazīd said, “That was because Abū ‘Umar al-Jarmī knew *ahādīth*. When he learned the book of Sibuwayh, he learned *fiqh* in *hadīth* since it is from the book of Sibuwayh that he learned investigation and *tafsīr*. Then he looked into the *sunnas* which are firmly transmitted from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. It is by means of them that the seeker reaches what Allah means in His Book and that opens up for him the judgements of the Qur'ān. Ad-Ḍahhāk said about the words of the Almighty, *'Be people of the Lord because of your knowledge of the Book.'* (3:79), ‘It is a duty for whoever learns the Qur'ān to be a *faqīh*.’”

Ibn Abī'l-Hawārī mentioned, “A group of us went to Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyād in 185 AH and stopped at his door, but he did not give us permission to enter. One of the people said, ‘If he comes out for anything, he will come out to recitation of the Qur'ān.’ So we ordered a reciter to recite and he appeared to us from a window. We said, ‘Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah.’ He said, ‘And peace upon you.’ We asked, ‘How are you, Abū ‘Alī?’ He replied, ‘I am in well-being from Allah and harm from you. What you are doing is something new in Islam. We belong to Allah and are returning to Him! This is not how we seek knowledge! We used to go to the shaykhs and would not see ourselves worthy of sitting with them. We sat below them and eavesdropped. When a *hadīth* was given, we would ask them to repeat it and we would retain it. You seek knowledge with ignorance. You waste the Book

of Allah. If you had sought the Book of Allah, you would have found in it healing for what you want.’ We said, ‘We have studied the Qur’ān.’ He said, ‘Your study of the Qur’ān is work enough for your lives and the lives of your children!’ We asked, ‘How, Abū ‘Alī?’ He replied, ‘You will not learn the Qur’ān until you know its *i'rāb*, its *muhkam* from its *mutashābih*, and its abrogating from its abrogated. When you know that, then you will have no need of the words of Fudayl and Ibn ‘Uyayna.’ Then he said, ‘I seek refuge with Allah, the All-Hearing, All-Knowing from the Accursed Shaytān. In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful. *“O mankind! An admonition has come to you from your Lord and also healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers. Say: ‘It is the favour of Allah and His mercy that should be the cause of their rejoicing. That is better than anything they accumulate.”*’ (10:57-58)’

When the reader of the Qur’ān obtains these ranks, he will be fluent in the Qur’ān and know the Discrimination. He will be close to the one who brings him close to it. He will not benefit from any of what we have mentioned until he has a sincere intention for Allah when he seeks it, or continues to have a sincere intention after learning it, as was already stated. A seeker of knowledge may begin by desiring reputation and honour in the *dīn*. Then his understanding of knowledge continues until it is clear to him that he has erred in his belief, and so he repents of that and makes his intention sincere for Allah. He benefits from that and improves his state. Al-Hasan said, “We used to seek knowledge for this world and it dragged us to the Next World.” Sufyān ath-Thawrī said that. Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit said, “We sought this matter and we had no intention in it. The intention came afterwards.”